



>> TAOS ECO PARK, Alexander Gusdorf Eco Park. Courtesy of Living Designs Group Architects, Taos, NM.

Green field built on brownfield

ONE OF THE END RESULTS of a good athletic facility is its economic impact on a community. A good facility can elevate a city, increasing its tourism dollars and making it a more desirable location for sports travel.

It was with both of these goals, athletic and economic, in mind that the Alexander Gusdorf Eco-Park in Taos, NM was designed. The facility, one of the world's highest-altitude FIFA Two-Star Certified training facilities, beckons world-class athletes; in fact, the Rwandan National Team spent a month at the park, training for its World Cup match. At the same time, the multi-purpose complex has never ceased to serve the youth of the community as a home for soccer, lacrosse, rugby and football.

Perhaps the most interesting eco-

friendly aspect of the project, however, is not what's on the ground now, but what used to lie beneath. The original site had been used as a landfill, causing it to be classified as a brownfield.

Yes, you read that last sentence. And yes, the completed facility is called the Eco-Park. Making that happen means that some very special design and construction work went into the project, encompassing everything from drainage to material supply, and from layout to landscaping.



Living Designs Group Architect (LDG) worked with both the town of Taos and the Taos Municipal School District to develop the facility, has completed Phase One of the three-phase complex, which includes one FIFA certified artificial turf soccer field, a restroom and storage builders, nature trails, 752-seat permanent grandstands, as well as parking areas.

Remediation of the seven-acre site was a priority, but even that was performed in an earth-sensitive manner. Douglas Patterson of LDG notes the only haul-off from the site was the trash and debris from the brownfield area (a total of 140 cubic yards), was completely repurposed on an adjoining property. The remaining hillside was re-graded and in finished construction, will provide a hillside amphitheatre-like seating area for an additional field.

GREEN TOUCHES IN ALL ASPECTS OF CONSTRUCTION

Some of the facility's sustainable features include artificial turf with a 100% recycled rubber infill, use of native plants in landscaping and recycled stormwater for

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irrigation. Planted swales of porous material in the parking lot collect water for native shade trees and use it for passive irrigation in order to help reduce the 'heat island' phenomenon. In fact, this water, plus that caught off fields is all directed to storage tanks and helps offset water use by nearly 200,000 gallons per year.

Further eco-friendly touches abound: A local bus stop encourages use of mass transit, rather than personal cars. Occupancy sensors are located in the restrooms for lighting and ventilation, as well as daylighting, and help save on energy costs.

Recycled materials were used in the construction of the restroom storage building.

"The largest source of certifiable green products was the laminated engineered wood roof framing; in fact, exposed structural element can be seen in the restroom storage building. The wood is sourced and certified as sustainably grown and certified."

Patterson also notes that much of the materials used in construction was manufactured within 500 miles of the project, and that some of it came as close as seven miles away from the jobsite.

LDG worked with Lone Mountain Contracting, Inc. (Bosque Farms, NM) which acted as general contractor for the 26-acre project.

STAYING IN THE BLACK

A good sports facility can act as an economic engine for an area. The Eco-Park sees a variety of use from all levels of athletes, and according to Patterson, "has brought immediate press and recognition to the town."

The facility's overall design and construction excellence, combined with its ability to balance the needs of two large public entities and multiple stakeholders, won it honors among those in the athletic facility construction industry as well. Alexander Gusdorf Eco-Park was honored as an outstanding single-field facility in the annual awards program sponsored by the American Sports Builders Association (ASBA), the national organization for builders and suppliers of materials for athletic facilities. In addition, the Eco-Park was honored with ASBA's Green Facility of the Year Award, presented to the sports facility showing the highest standards of excellence in earth-friendly design and construction.

Patterson notes the project was years in the making, but was worth every minute. "LDG worked with the town of Taos for over a decade to envision, lay the groundwork and eventually build this facility."

And that's only phase one. Phases two and three are yet to come, and will include an 87-kilowatt solar array, two more FIFA-certified fields (one of which will be artificial turf), changing rooms, volleyball courts, a playground and a concession area.

Count on it all to be green, and count on it to bring in the athletes and keep the focus on Taos. ■



The advertisement features a photograph of a person in a blue shirt operating a green maintenance machine on a sports field. The machine has two large white tanks and is moving along a concrete path. In the background, stadium seating and various advertisements are visible, including 'EDMONTON', 'RE/MAX', 'EPCOR', and 'RONA'. The top of the ad has the 'ecochemical' logo and the text 'TEMPLINE FIELD COATINGS + EQUIPMENT'. Below the photo, a blue banner contains the text 'PAINT → EXTRACT → REPAINT' and 'It's how the pros convert their fields.' At the bottom, it says 'THE INNOVATOR IN ECO-FRIENDLY PAINT + STAINS' and provides the website 'eco-templine.com' and phone number '800-677-7930'.